



PSCnews

Public Service Commission of South Carolina

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HELPFUL LINKS

Public Service Commission
www.psc.sc.gov

Docket Management
System (DMS)
<http://dms.psc.sc.gov>

ETariff System
<http://etariff.psc.sc.gov>

Patty Sands, Editor

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Commissioner Clyburn Heads to the FCC

Public Service Commissioner Mignon Clyburn is headed to Washington, D.C. to serve on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC.) This past April, Commissioner Clyburn was nominated by President Barack Obama to serve on the Commission.

On July 15, 2009, Commissioner Clyburn appeared before the United States Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to participate in a hearing on her pending nomination. Commissioner Clyburn told the Senate Committee that she will draw on her experience as a newspaper publisher, state utility regulator and chair of NARUC's Washington Ac-



tion Committee to confront the nation's communications challenges. She is a strong believer in the value of collaboration and has witnessed the benefits of cooperation among local, state, and federal governmental agencies to achieve common goals and objectives. The Senate Committee approved her nomination on July 22, 2009, and a full vote by the Senate confirmed her nomination July 24.

Commissioner Clyburn officially became a member of the FCC at her swearing in ceremony held August 3, 2009. She chose Columbia as the venue for the ceremony for many reasons, but foremost to allow the

Honorable Matthew J. Perry, Jr. to administer the oath to her in the courthouse named after him. As a U.S. District Court judge, he has been held in high esteem by Commissioner Clyburn and her family for many years.



Commissioner Clyburn thanked her family, friends and colleagues for supporting her through the nomination process. In a statement released following the ceremony, she said, "I am deeply honored that President Obama and the United States Senate have entrusted me with the privilege of serving as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission. I look forward to working with the Administration, Congress, Chairman Genachowski, my fellow Commissioners and the incredibly talented FCC staff, to ensure that all Americans enjoy the tremendous benefits offered by modern communications. This is an exciting and challenging time in our nation's history. I am eager to hear from and work with all stakeholders to carry out, along with my colleagues, communications policies that protect consumers and encourage robust competition and innovation."

As Commissioner Clyburn leaves the Palmetto State, we wish her the best and know she will become an integral part of the FCC.

From the Chair...Lib Fleming



Since the restructuring of the Commission in 2004, there had been some confusion about the customer complaint process. Customers who have a problem now work with the Office of Regulatory Staff to see if the complaint can be resolved

informally with the utility before filing a complaint with the Commission. The vast majority of complaints are resolved in this informal process.

When the informal process does not achieve a resolution, the customer has the right to file a complaint and be heard by the Commission. These customer complaints are cases subject to most of the same legal requirements as other matters before the Commission. However, we recognized that some

adjustments needed to be made for customer complaints. Individual customers are typically not represented by attorneys, and they are not familiar with administrative practice requirements. The Commission, the ORS, and the regulated utilities all agreed that the process needed to be simplified, and complaints needed to be resolved more expeditiously.

A group of volunteers worked together to tackle the problem. The result is a new process that conforms to the requirements of the Code of Judicial Conduct and South Carolina law, but lacks the jargon and unnecessary formalities of the administrative process. As a result, customers appearing before the PSC will have a faster and easier way to get their complaints resolved. (See related article on Page 4.)



South Carolina Hosts SEARUC 2009



PSC Commissioner David Wright recently organized and hosted the annual conference of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC.) As president of SEARUC, Commissioner Wright was responsible for the event, which was held in Charleston, SC, June 21-23, 2009 at the Charleston Place Hotel and Convention Center.



SEARUC President David Wright

SEARUC is an organization comprised of members from the southeastern states and is affiliated with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC.) At this year's conference, SEARUC

welcomed the state of Texas as its newest member, increasing its state memberships to eleven.

The conference focused on addressing current utility regulation issues facing member states, such as carbon emission control legislation that is being proposed at the federal level, energy efficiency and

renewable energy programs in the South, and expansion of broadband access into rural areas. Conference attendees included commissioners from the member states, and representatives from utilities, state and federal government agencies, law firms, environmental and conservation organizations, and strategic planning companies.

NARUC President Fred Butler and SEARUC President David Wright welcomed the conference attendees to Charleston and kicked off the first of four general sessions. In addition, two break-out sessions were held allowing participants an opportunity to attend a session of specific interest.

Several members of the SC General Assembly and Public Utility Review Committee (PURC) participated in the conference. PURC chairman Senator Thomas Alexander was the keynote speaker and Senators (Continued on next page.)



NARUC President Fred Butler

South Carolina Hosts SEARUC 2009 (continued)

Glenn McConnell and Luke Rankin, and Representatives Bill Sandifer, Harry Cato, and Harry Ott along with Mr. Eric Ebersole served as panelists or panel moderators.

Aside from the business meetings, there were several recreational events incorporated into the program. A reception and tour was held at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center in Charleston, home of the *H.L. Hunley*, the Confederate States historic submarine. In addition to being a panelist at one of the general sessions, Senate President *Pro Tempore* Glenn McConnell, a Charleston historian and chairman of the Hunley Commission, delivered a special address on the *Hunley*.

All together, nearly 300 visitors contributed to the South Carolina economy by attending SEARUC. At the Commission's July 15, 2009 meeting, PSC Chairman Fleming congratulated Commissioner Wright on his efforts for hosting an outstanding SEARUC conference.



SC Senate President *Pro Tempore* Glenn McConnell



PURC Chairman Senator Thomas Alexander



PSC Chairman Fleming congratulates Commissioner Wright for hosting an outstanding conference.



Exhibit from the Hunley Museum

NARUC Appointment



Commissioner Swain Whitfield was recently appointed to the National Association of Regulated Utility

Commissioners (NARUC) Committee on Energy Resources and the Environment. The committee focuses on energy efficiency, environmental protection, renewable

and distributed resources, consumer protection, low-income weatherization and assistance, and public interest research and development. He recently attended his first committee meeting at NARUC's annual Summer Committee Meetings.

Commissioner Whitfield said of his appointment, "I am excited and honored to be on this committee. Initiatives of the

Committee on Energy Resources and the Environment such as energy efficiency and weatherization are important to the citizens of South Carolina. My goal on this committee is be an advocate for South Carolinians."

Commissioner Whitfield is the At Large representative and has been a member of the Commission since July 2008.

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Commission Improves Customer Complaint Filing Process


On July 15, 2009, the Commission implemented its new, improved customer complaint procedure, which includes a new online complaint form which greatly simplifies the complaint process. The new form is designed to ensure that complainants provide the necessary information for timely adjudication of a complaint.

One key feature of the form is that it provides complainants with a user friendly way to prefile their testimony with the Commission. Also, a hearing officer will be appointed to each complaint as it is filed, and a scheduling letter will be issued, providing a hearing date and other relevant deadlines.

The new process was devised with the help of the Commission's Advisory Committee, which

made extensive suggestions on how to simplify procedures and design the new complaint form. The goal of the new process is to bring all complaints to a resolution within 45 days of filing, which is favorable to all parties. In addition, the new procedure streamlines the internal processing of a complaint, saving staff time and money.

In the coming months, the Commission will continue to explore ways to make the process more user friendly by providing more information about the Commission's regulatory authority and hearing procedures on its website. To view the new complaint form, visit the [Commission's website](http://www.psc.sc.gov) and click on Consumer Info.

Public Service Commission of South Carolina 101 Executive Center Dr., Suite 100 Columbia, SC 29210		 Complaint Form		Phone: 803-896-5100 Fax: 803-896-5199 www.psc.sc.gov
Date: _____				
Complainant or Legal Representative Information: * Required Fields				
Name *				
Firm (if applicable) _____				
Mailing Address *				
City, State Zip * _____ Phone * _____				
E-mail *				
Name of Utility Involved in Complaint: *				
Type of Complaint (check appropriate box below) *				
<input type="checkbox"/> Billing Error/Adjustment	<input type="checkbox"/> Deposits and Credit Establishment	<input type="checkbox"/> Wrong Rate	<input type="checkbox"/> Refusal to Connect Service	
<input type="checkbox"/> Disconnection of Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Payment Arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Line Extension Issue	
<input type="checkbox"/> Service Issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Meter Issue			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (be specific) _____				
Have you contacted the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS)? * <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Name of ORS Contact: _____				
Concise Statement of Facts/Complaint: * (This section must be completed. Attach additional information to this page if necessary.)				
Relief Requested: * (This section must be completed. Attach additional information to this page if necessary.)				
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) COUNTY OF _____)		VERIFICATION		Internal Use Only
I, _____		verify that I have read my complaint filed on _____ Date *		Processed By _____
and know the contents thereof, and that said contents are true.		Complainant's Signature *		Date _____
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